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Prospects for Revolution in the Philippines: An Indicators Approach

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An Intelligence Assessment

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Prospects for Revolution in the Philippines: An Indicators Approach

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted] of the
Political Instability Branch, Office of Global Issues.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
addressed to the Chief, Instability and Insurgency
Center, OGI, [redacted]

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This paper was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. [redacted]

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**Prospects for Revolution
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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 March 1983
was used in this report.*

On the basis of an analysis of selected indicators, we believe that a dramatic slide into instability is unlikely to occur in the Philippines for at least the next two years. President Marcos's considerable personal political skills and conservative social forces—including the Roman Catholic Church, traditional elites with their patron-client networks, and the military—are likely to remain strong enough to contain increasing disaffection to the regime for at least a few more years. We are, however, less certain about the stability of the Marcos regime in the long term, particularly in the event of Marcos's departure from the scene.

Many ingredients of political instability are present in the Philippines, including deteriorating social and economic conditions, a growing insurgency, and greatly weakened political institutions. Marcos's dismemberment of a longstanding pluralistic system and his unwillingness to allow further political liberalization after formally lifting martial law have created a political environment that is prompting some moderate opponents to seek more radical alternatives.

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These judgments concerning medium- and long-term political instability in the Philippines are based on a systematic review of indicators of social, economic, and political change. Specifically, we examined 21 indicators of potential instability with reference to the Philippines. Thirteen suggest a current worsening in the conditions that lead to instability, seven show no change, and one is ambiguous. Supporting our judgment that political instability is not imminent, some major indicators of instability are *not* present. We have not observed:

- A precipitate breakdown of traditional authority patterns.
- A rapid increase in the variety and number of acts of civil disobedience.
- An introduction or rapid escalation of foreign support of domestic opposition groups.

Supporting our concern about instability over the long term, the following indicators, among others, *are* present:

- A decline in social mobility and economic opportunity.
- The emergence of alternative political philosophies.
- A polarization between regime supporters and opposition groups.
- A declining government financial position.
- The weakening of political institutions.
- Declining government authority over territory and security of population.

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This assessment of indicators is a snapshot in time. Examined in the future at regular intervals—for example, every six months—the indicators might show in the next several years overall improvement, a further worsening situation, or fluctuation. A negative shift in one or more of the major indicators that currently shows no increase in instability—or intensification of trends in the indicators that currently do show increasing instability—would be cause for additional concern.

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The potential for future instability is being exploited most successfully by the Communist Party of the Philippines/Marxist-Leninist (CPP) and its military wing, the New People's Army (NPA). The CPP also has an increasingly potent political wing—the National Democratic Front (NDF). The CPP/NPA does not yet have—and may never attain—the ability to defeat the government; but its emphasis on planning, organization, strategy, and tactics together with its focus on specific social issues and conflicts make it an increasingly important threat to stability. To assess the potential CPP threat we have evaluated its capabilities against those of previously successful revolutionary groups in other countries.

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Criteria for Evaluating the Threat to the Political Stability of the Philippines

Socioeconomic Attitudes and Pressures:

- Precipitate breakdown of traditional authority patterns.
- Decline in economic mobility.
- Increased economic stress.
- Increased inequity and corruption.
- Rising national indignation about dependency on or domination by a foreign power or foreign values

Antiregime Attitudes and Behavior:

- Withering of popular support for regime.
- Erosion of support among political elites.
- Emergence of alternative political philosophies.
- Polarization between regime supporters and opposition groups.
- Rapid increase in variety and number of acts of civil disobedience.
- Better executed, more frequent, and discriminate acts of urban terrorism.

- Introduction or escalation of rural insurgency.
- Introduction or escalation of foreign support of domestic opposition groups.

Regime Capabilities and Behavior:

- Declining government authority over territory and security of population.
- Increasing loss of control over armed forces.
- Deteriorating government financial position.
- Increasing severe suppression of outlets for legal dissidence.
- Increasingly frequent policy changes and governmental reorganizations.
- Appearance of increasing indecisiveness resulting from conflicting policies of liberalization and repression.
- Weakening political institutions.
- Declining capability of government for political mobilization.

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Prospects for Revolution in the Philippines: An Indicators Approach

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The Instability and Insurgency Center, OGI, is producing a series of studies in which a set of indicators is systematically evaluated to provide a degree of rigor and comprehensiveness to the analysis of political instability. The sets of indicators used in the individual studies vary according to: (1) the time frame of the study—short term (six months or less), intermediate term (seven months to two years), or long term (beyond two years); and (2) whether the analysis concerns generalized political instability or one of its subsets, such as militarily organized insurgency or regime collapse. In this paper, we are primarily concerned with the likelihood of general instability in the Philippines over the long term.

liberalization, and a weakening of political institutions. Review of our indicators confirms this underlying strain. On the other hand, continuity in authority patterns and consistency in government policies, continued support of the government by the armed forces, and generally effective security control over cities and towns militate against the effects of these strains. While on balance the strains are probably not regime threatening in the medium term, their effects, if continued, would likely be compounded over the long term into a more serious situation. The following material lays out the results of our indicator analysis.

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Introduction

This paper examines the potential for radical political change in the Philippines over the long term—more than two years. The paper is presented in two parts. The first part focuses on political instability risks by: looking at conditions that might lead to social and political turmoil; analyzing the capabilities of major opposition groups and identifying the one most likely to provoke and gain by revolutionary conditions; and assessing the Marcos regime's capability to respond to serious challenge. It reviews 21 indicators of socioeconomic change, antiregime activity, and regime competence. In the second part, we assess the strengths and weaknesses of political opposition groups. Specifically, we assess their strengths and weaknesses with an eye toward identifying the group or groups posing the greatest long-term threat to the Marcos regime. In doing this, we compare Philippine opposition groups with successful revolutionary movements in other countries.

The Philippines now faces a number of strains that can affect the Marcos regime or its successor. Among the most serious strains are a decline in social mobility and economic opportunity, an absence of political

Socioeconomic Attitudes and Pressures

• Precipitate Breakdown of Traditional Authority Patterns—*Not Evident*

This phenomenon has not been occurring in the Philippines. Rather, new authority patterns have gradually been imposed on top of the old, in part as a result of the implementation of Marcos's "New Society" program—a plan designed to modernize the economy and increase social equity. Many academic and government observers argue that neither of these objectives has been achieved; but the "New Society" has forced the traditional oligarchy to adapt to new circumstances, led certain Church elements to become discontented with the regime, and brought new elites—particularly the military—into the power equation. Although this reordering of the political influence and attitudes of national elites has introduced some new uncertainties, its evolutionary pace is not threatening to national stability.

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The military is emerging as potentially the most significant political actor and eventually may fill the political vacuum that appears to be developing because of Marcos's intolerance of serious opposition. In the countryside, the paternalism of the traditional

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Marcos's New Society Program

In 1971, a year before he imposed martial law, Marcos published his prescription for the Filipino society. His concept, called the New Society, envisioned social and economic reform, a modern and centralized economy, and a consensual political system. [redacted]

The economic cornerstone of the New Society is a land reform begun in 1972. Critics argue that, although heralded by the government for its accomplishments, the land reform is so riddled with loopholes and exemptions that it helps very few.

Two-thirds of the country's agricultural land is automatically excluded, and many landowners are able to avoid the effects of the laws by shifting crops. Most of the large estates of the oligarchic families, however, have been broken up and redistributed. [redacted]

Another major economic feature of the New Society program is the effort to modernize the leading export commodity sector, coconut products, through a centralized government-sponsored trading and pricing entity. It is also a divisive political issue involving political and commercial interests tied to Marcos and his closest associates. Other highly publicized New Society and subsequent economic programs, such as the rural credit and development project, known as KKK (Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran), and the urban renewal BLISS program, are largely showpieces, undercapitalized and ineffectual. [redacted]

The political cornerstone of the New Society is the doctrine of "constitutional authoritarianism," which entails the creation of a grass-roots political infrastructure based on patron-client networks ultimately beholden to Marcos. The major consequence of Marcos's restructuring of the Philippine political system is the higher profile and increased influence of the military and civilian technocrats at the expense of the legislature, courts, the press, and other institutions of the previous democratic order. [redacted]

elite has historically acted as a shock absorber between aggrieved citizens and the government. Martial law, however, in part reduced the oligarchy's ability to

perform this function. Simultaneously, martial law put the military in a position to wield considerable political clout, an option it has yet to exercise fully. So far [redacted] the military has tended to view its enhanced position more as a reward for loyal service and an opportunity for personal gain than as a means to establish political power. Nonetheless, its presence is being felt more and more, and both public and private statements of politicians indicate that it is becoming increasingly important in the calculations of all political actors.

[redacted]

The oligarchs have survived change by adapting. Before martial law, the traditional oligarchic elite was composed of some 400 families whose vertically structured, regionally based dominions ruled Philippine society. As the economy modernized, many of the oligarchs moved to Manila and diversified their economic interests while maintaining their position at the apex of a pyramid of rural patron-client networks that favor continuity and stability. Most of those who invested their wealth in the modern sector became part of the new urban-based ruling political elite and part of Marcos's ruling KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan) political coalition. Of those who were not co-opted by Marcos, some have become leaders in the moderate opposition. [redacted]

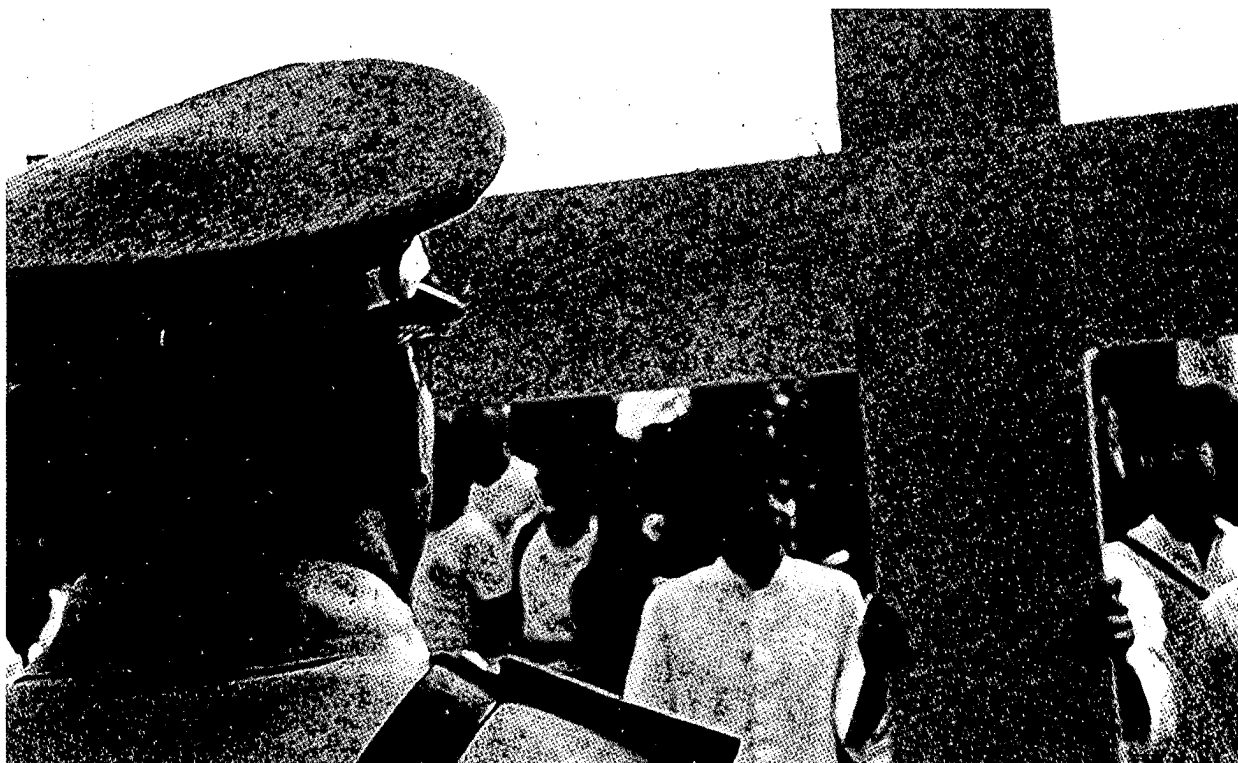
The Catholic Church—another important traditional authority network—continues to retain its considerable position and influence. Its emphasis on obedience to hierarchical authority represents a force for moderation and anti-Communism. Since martial law, however, the Church leadership has spoken out against social neglect and human rights abuses, most pointedly in the recent joint pastoral letter of the country's 110 bishops. More importantly, younger priests and nuns have become involved in social issues, and,

[redacted] a few have been radicalized to the point of giving active assistance to the Communists. Their public statements show that they believe the Marcos regime should institute significant reforms aimed at better distribution of income and halting military abuses.¹ [redacted]

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Church-state relations have recently become aggravated by increased social activism among younger priests and nuns.

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• **Decline in Economic Mobility—Evident**

This condition is gradually developing, primarily as a result of unfavorable economic and demographic trends. High birth rates in recent decades promise unprecedented growth in the labor force during the next 10 years when the economy is unlikely to allow a similar growth in jobs. Already unemployment is 14 percent nationwide and almost twice that in Manila, according to a Development Academy of the Philippines Survey. The aspiring children of the urban and rural poor, as well as those of the middle class, are finding it increasingly difficult to get ahead.

major losses which have required government bail-outs; real wages have been stagnant since 1979; unemployment has doubled nationwide; and the number of urban slumdweller and rural poor has dramatically increased. Fragmented and co-opted labor organizations have largely failed to extract better pay and conditions for workers. Low world commodity prices for sugar and copra exports have caused farmers great financial hardships.

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• **Increased Economic Stress—Evident**

The economic downturn that started in 1980, brought about mainly by depressed world conditions, is causing nationwide stress. We estimate that the country's 1982 growth rate was not the 3.8 percent the government announced but near zero. There also was a sharp deterioration in the balance of payments. Several of the largest companies in the Philippines have suffered

• **Increased Inequity and Corruption—Evident**

World Bank studies and the US Embassy generally observe that the economic benefits of the New Society have not trickled down but coagulated at the top. Overall, income distribution has become more unequal since martial law was imposed. The US Embassy and other observers believe that, politically, it is

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seriously diminishing Marcos's appeal, which has been based on economic prosperity:

— In the cities, particularly Metro-Manila, glaring economic disparity continues to grow. According to a 1981 World Bank report, the number of urban poor increased from 24 percent to 40 percent of the urban population between 1975 and 1980. Squatters now make up 38 percent of the Metro-Manila total population. Press reporting indicates that slumdweller are becoming organized and capable of articulating grievances. Some labor groups have also become more militant since the end of martial law. This volatile mixture means that issues such as sudden increases in energy or food costs could lead to violent antiregime actions.

— In the countryside, discontent remains unrelieved, not only because of falling incomes but also because of government malfeasance, including price manipulations and mismanagement of distribution and marketing mechanisms. The resultant increase in rural poverty in some areas appears to be an important factor in leading some peasants to support the Communist insurgency. Finally, random media sampling suggests that among the more articulate and politically aware there appears to be a perception that graft and corruption—long-held criticisms of the government—not only continue in the New Society but are now more centralized, and hence more visible and objectionable. [REDACTED]

• **Rising National Indignation About Dependency on or Domination by a Foreign Power or Values—Evident**

Efforts to modernize and integrate the Philippines more fully into the world economy have increased its foreign dependency and significantly heightened national sensitivities. According to recent editorials, the massive infusion of foreign-owned capital, much of which is concentrated in the manufacturing and export sectors, is creating annoyance among members of the urban middle class. They are questioning the regime's ability to maintain its economic independence. The issue of foreign economic exploitation is being capitalized on by both the moderate and radical opposition. The US bases review scheduled for April



Opposition rally poster depicts President Marcos as "fascist" dictator controlled by Japanese and American business interests.

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has also become a rallying point for the opposition, many of whom regard the bases as an infringement on Philippine sovereignty. Although the US Embassy has been unable thus far to assess the strength of the movement, it has expressed concern that the antibases movement is tailored for exploitation by Communist-influenced elements. [REDACTED]

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Antiregime Attitudes and Behavior

• **Withering of Popular Support for Regime—Partially Evident**

Although it is impossible to measure accurately the decline in popular support for Marcos, recent reports from the US Embassy suggest that the regime's

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image and credibility have fallen. [redacted]

[redacted] local government representatives at a meeting in April 1982 discussed this decline and found that significant popular cynicism and hostility existed. [redacted]

• **Erosion of Support Among Political Elites—*Recently Evident***

The new ruling elite of businessmen, political appointees, the military, government technocrats, and some pre-Marcos oligarchs have benefited from the system and have been loyal to the President. Since 1980, however, there appears to have been a growing crisis of confidence among some segments of the elite with regard to the government. Newspaper editorials and US Embassy reports suggest that the confidence of the oligarchic elite, for instance, has been shaken by the combination of a downturn in the economy plus financial scandals involving cronies of the Marcos family. Similarly, the business community has expressed doubts about the government. The President of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for example, recently warned that Filipino businesses across the board are facing financial difficulties. Marcos has publicly accused some members of the business elite of conspiring to foment unrest. Reform measures designed to depoliticize economic policy and ensure more effective economic development are now under way. If these are not successful, we believe the new economic elite may become less supportive of Marcos and his policies. [redacted]

• **Emergence of Alternative Political Philosophies—*Evident***

Several new opposition philosophies have been promulgated to take advantage of the perceived failure of the Marcos regime. Most publications or speeches stress vague themes of democratic socialism but none—apart from the Communists—have a programmatic plan for action:

- The United Nationalist Democratic Opposition (UNIDO), a loose coalition of moderate opposition parties, calls for the restoration of democratic and human rights, populist economic policies, a halt to corruption, and the end of foreign domination. Splinter groups within UNIDO advocate more radical social change through peaceful and democratic means.

- The radical but weak and splintered Social Democratic movement presents itself as the “third alternative” to Communism and the right. Its Jesuit-influenced philosophy combines nationalism with Christian socialism.

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- Potentially the most attractive philosophy is offered by the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), which shrouds its Communist ideology in a well-thought-out program emphasizing popular grievances against the government. [redacted]

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• **Polarization Between Regime Supporters and Opposition Groups—*Evident***

Diverse opposition groups—former traditional politicians, Social Democrats, Communists, and Muslims—have found areas for cooperation against the regime. Their political pronouncements have become increasingly left of center, nationalistic, and anti-American. Nonetheless, we believe this drift is gradual and presents no unmanageable problems for Marcos at the present time. In October 1982, UNIDO President Salvador H. Laurel made a public appeal for a new constitution to reflect the “true sentiments of the real opposition” and has warned of the “worsening radicalization” of various groups in the country. In addition to statements such as this, we have observed a growing willingness of moderates to participate in public forums with individuals leading more radical movements. [redacted]

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• **Rapid Increase in Variety and Number of Acts of Civil Disobedience—*Not Evident***

[redacted]

We believe that more recent acts of civil disobedience have failed in the Philippines because of a lack of organization, public cynicism, and the superior enforcement capabilities of the government, particularly in the Metro-Manila area. However, some demonstrations, both in Manila and in the provinces, continue to be reported by the Embassy and in the press. A broad alliance of moderate and radical opposition political parties, labor groups, students, and clergy joined in May 1981 to demonstrate against and boycott the 16 June presidential elections in which Marcos ran virtually unopposed for a six-year extension of his term. There has been no further attempt at mass

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action. Recent opposition attempts to boycott regional elections have drawn only limited support. [redacted]

• **Better Executed and More Frequent and Discriminate Acts of Urban Terrorism—*Not Evident***

Urban terrorism has declined since martial law was lifted in January 1981. Acts of urban terrorism by various opposition groups have generally been met with a hostile public response and have not affected the regime's ability to rule. Government antiterrorism efforts have been effective, especially in Manila. Terrorism peaked in the 1979-80 period during the height of the "June Bride" urban terrorism campaign and since then opposition activity in the cities has been mostly nonviolent. [redacted]

• **Introduction or Escalation of Rural Insurgency—*Evident***

The level of Communist (CPP/NPA) insurgency, however, is increasing in the countryside.² Year-end official figures for 1982 show a 33-percent increase in incidents over 1981. The government estimates that since 1978 the number of NPA regular guerrillas has doubled to 6,000 and the number of popular supporters is more than 180,000. The insurgency, previously confined to relatively isolated areas in Samar, Luzon, and Mindanao, is spreading to more populated areas, particularly the Misamis Oriental and Davao del Norte Provinces in the south. [redacted]

[redacted]

NPA guerrillas are becoming bolder, conducting larger scale raids (occasionally involving as many as 70 to several hundred guerrillas) on more highly populated targets in broad daylight. Their objectives appear to be to illustrate their strength, and conversely the government's weakness, and to procure arms from overrun government arsenals. The authorities also note an increase in selective assassinations in rural areas. On the other hand, the Muslim insurgency in the south—led by the Moro National Liberation

Front (MNLF)—is declining. [redacted]

• **Introduction or Escalation of Foreign Support of Domestic Opposition Groups—*Not Evident***

[redacted] dissidents in the Philippines continue to receive only moderate support from abroad. Aid levels do not appear to be growing and, in fact, may be diminishing. [redacted]

[redacted] UNIDO and the Social Democrats receive some material support from expatriate Filipino dissident groups. The old-line, pro-Soviet Communist Party, the PKP, and the CPP/NPA, have been forced to be largely self-reliant, and the absence of significant foreign support has inhibited the growth of the NPA insurgency. Beijing ceased supplying the CPP/NPA with financial and military aid in the early 1970s. In early 1982 President Marcos and his Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver claimed publicly that the NPA was receiving arms from abroad, presumably from the Soviets, after several AK-47 and AK-50 assault rifles were discovered in central Luzon. [redacted]

[redacted] The MNLF, which used to receive support from Libya, other Arab countries, and Malaysia, now receives only modest external assistance. [redacted]

Regime Competence and Behavior

• **Declining Government Authority Over Territory and Security of Population—*Evident***

Despite eight years of martial law, which enhanced the power and authority of the executive and post-martial-law institutionalization of those powers, the government has been increasingly unable to guarantee the security of outlying villages because of the worsening insurgency. The chief constraints to the maintenance of government authority are geographic—the

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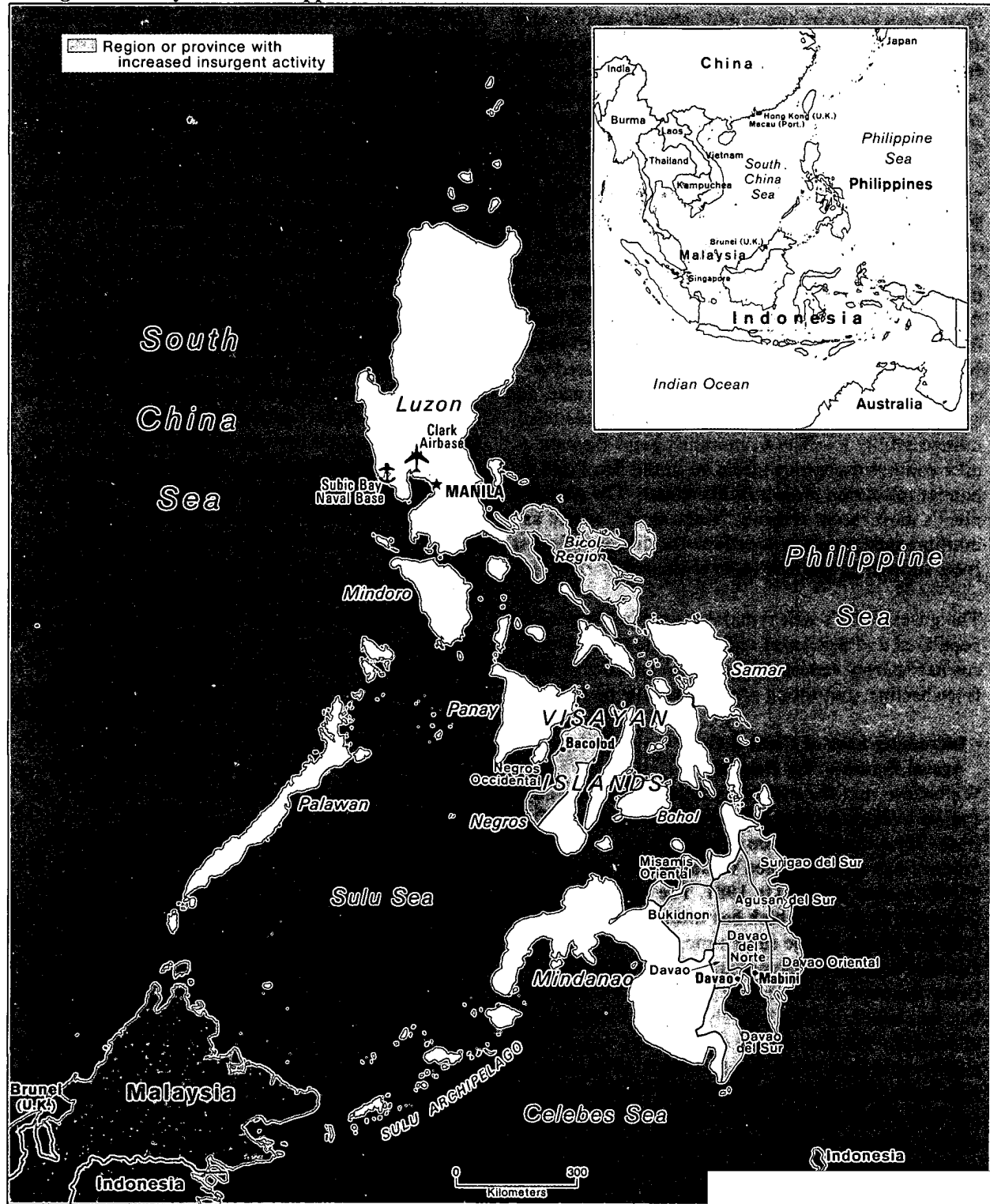
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Insurgent Activity in the Philippines



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Philippines has more than 7,000 islands—and budgetary. The areas of weakest authority are in geographically remote northeast Luzon; the Bicol; traditionally lawless and isolated Samar; and parts of non-Muslim central and eastern Mindanao, which are also areas of active insurgency. [REDACTED]

Until late last fall the Communist insurgents had generally been contained by government forces. Recently, however, they have become bolder, raided towns in Mindanao in groups of several hundred during daylight hours, and in one instance held a town hostage for an entire day before voluntarily retreating. The US defense attache recently reported that NPA guerrillas effectively control some isolated areas—notably parts of Luzon, the Visayas, Samar, and eastern Mindanao. Last year, the armed forces tried unsuccessfully to offset Communist gains through a pilot counterinsurgency offensive in the Bicol and a hamlet relocation project in Mindanao. The government's most recent scheme, "Katatagan," touted as a multipronged program to reduce the dissidents' grassroots support, is too new to be evaluated. [REDACTED]

The government's writ remains strong in the densely populated and developed regions of the country. Marcos has sharply reduced the random violence of the freewheeling, gun-toting pre-martial-law period. [REDACTED]

• Increasing Loss of Control Over

Armed Forces—Not Evident

We believe that the military is loyal to Marcos, and a coup is unlikely as long as he remains the head of state. Since the imposition of martial law in 1972, the military has nearly trebled in size from a strength of 55,400 to over 156,000 in 1981. The officer corps has increased threefold, which has meant rapid promotions for many. At the same time, the military has assumed a major economic and local political role. Every member of the general staff sits on a corporate business board, although rarely do they become active in everyday business affairs of the firms. Moreover, middle- and even junior-grade officers pursue outside financial activities. According to US Embassy observers, Marcos allows military officers to take advantage of their official positions to better themselves financially in order to deflect potential dissatisfaction. Active duty and retired senior officers also hold

important positions in government ministries, and provincial and constabulary commanders have become more important in many rural areas than the civilian government officials. Although the military now faces budgetary constraints, and some officers may be resentful of the retention of senior officers beyond normal retirement age, this is not likely to affect the armed forces' subservience to civilian rule under Marcos. [REDACTED]

• Deteriorating Government Financial

Position—Evident

Although President Marcos's ambitious development plans brought about a 5- to 6-percent annual national economic growth rate during the 1970s, excessive public and private borrowing and a decline in prices for all major exports greatly increased the nation's foreign debt which has consequently weakened the country's overall financial position and limited the government's financial options. The public sector is responsible for about half of last year's record \$18 billion foreign debt, nearly triple the 1978 debt of \$6.6 billion. As a result, the country's creditworthiness has declined since 1980, the prices of principal Filipino exports will likely remain low, and, although new loans probably can be attained, they are likely to be of shorter term and bear higher interest rates.

Under these circumstances, President Marcos will have to lower his development sights and will not be able to use fiscal policy to improve his political position, except for perhaps a brief period—after which conditions would likely become worse [REDACTED]

• Increasing Suppression of Outlets for Legal

Dissidence—Ambiguous

We do not believe governmental suppression has actually increased since the lifting of martial law in January 1981. Nevertheless, the early December arrests of 10 editors and journalists from the Manila publication *We Forum*—the only major legal opposition newspaper—demonstrate that the level of suppression continues to be substantial. Notwithstanding the token liberalization since the end of martial law, Marcos has been reluctant to ease restraints over opposition activity. The end of martial law improved the climate for the moderate opposition by allowing somewhat freer political activity. The US Embassy,

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however, reports little discernible progress in the liberalization of the media. Strikes, although now permissible, are restricted to what the President considers nonessential industries, and the opposition remains subject to prosecution in military courts under subversion charges. []

• **Increasingly Frequent Policy Changes and Government Reorganizations—*Not Evident***

President Marcos has been pragmatic in the day-to-day management of his policies yet resolute in his adherence to the general political, economic, and social policies that he embarked upon a decade ago. Despite rising criticism over the lack of genuine popular participation, we see little prospect of Marcos's returning to a system similar to that which existed in the pre-martial-law period. Substantial governmental reorganization did occur during martial law when Marcos sought to enhance his power and authority; since then, however, there has been little structural rearrangement. Between 1972 and 1975 Marcos conducted periodic purges of leading bureaucrats, judges, and military officers; but thereafter he concentrated on political oppositionists and labor leaders. To deflect public criticism of his "one-man rule," in 1981 Marcos set up a 15-member Executive Committee empowered to make major political and economic decisions. The Committee, currently composed of 10 members, has yet to consider a controversial or crucial issue. []

• **Appearance of Increasing Indecisiveness Resulting From Conflicting Policies of Liberalization and Repression—*Not Evident***

Marcos has not appeared indecisive; rather he has been selective in using his powers of repression because of his concern for domestic and foreign public opinion. Liberalization has been accompanied by periodic crackdowns designed to establish the limits of acceptable opposition behavior. Following the lifting of martial law in January 1981, for example, the government eased up on its antiopposition activities; but this period of liberalization ended in August 1982 with the announcement that a special 1,000-man

secret police force was being established to counteract an alleged plot by Muslim secessionists, Social Democrats, and Communists. Numerous anti-Marcos labor leaders and some politicians were then detained. []

• **Weakening Political Institutions—*Evident***

The martial law period effectively destroyed previously existing democratic institutions that helped shape and set limits to factional conflict for more than two decades after independence from the United States. Most national and local institutions in which rival centers of power used to compete legally were eliminated or restricted. Despite national and local elections since the end of martial law, the National Assembly and town councils are now essentially rubberstamps. Put simply, there are few institutional restraints on President Marcos's powers. What remains of the pre-martial-law political institutions are being further eroded. []

• **Declining Capability of Government for Political Mobilization—*Partially Evident***

The government's ability to garner public support is waning. While Marcos remains in control, denial of free political expression has made the radical opposition more attractive, rule by executive decree has impeded the growth of new political institutions, and the loyalty of some formerly supportive elites is dissipating. Most important, according to US Embassy personnel trip reports and statements by the Philippine Government and Church officials, popular perceptions of government performance, though never high, appear to be declining. Furthermore, the lack of a recognized successor to Marcos has raised anxieties about the future. []

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Characteristics of Previously Successful Revolutionary Movements

Leaders:

- *Total commitment to a cause.*
- *Passionate desire to succeed.*
- *Considerable interpersonal skills capable of inspiring both supporters and neutrals and translating ideas into action.*
- *Organizational talent.*
- *Common experiences, social class, and ethnic background with target population.*

Programs and Plans:

- *Clearly articulated goals able to be understood by the populace.*
- *Promises to redistribute the social, economic, or political resources of a country in a way that offers immediate rewards to the many.*
- *Political statements on other issues and grievances emotionally appealing to key sectors of the population.*

- *Coherent strategy and tactics to focus and coordinate activities.*
- *Flexibility to allow support for a "united front" for the purposes of subverting or co-opting other opposition groups.*

Organization:

- *Sufficiently sophisticated to have functionally specialized and organizationally disciplined departments.*
 - *Departmental units able to operate independently when faced with a break in communications, disruption of the chain of command, or loss of key leaders.*
 - *Organizational adaptability to meet changing requirements.*
 - *Discipline over individual members.*
 - *Extensive political intelligence networks.*
 - *Well-developed propaganda mechanisms.*
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Political Opposition in the Philippines

On the basis of our comparison of the major opposition groups in the Philippines, we believe that the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA) is in the best position to take advantage of political instability in the Philippines. Even though the party is still in the defensive stage of its protracted, rural-based struggle and faces formidable odds against Marcos and the military, it continues to gain adherents. The United Nationalist Democratic Opposition (UNIDO), the best known to the average Filipino, is poorly organized. The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) is small, active primarily among labor groups, and believed to be infiltrated by government agents. The Social Democrats have been inactive since 1979-80 when its ranks were depleted by arrests and unpopular radical tactics. [REDACTED]

For the CPP/NPA to succeed, there must be an intensification of current negative trends and probably a negative shift in other key indicators that currently do not point to instability. Certainly in the medium term it would also require a major change in the support given the regime by the military. In our view, if conditions were beginning to deteriorate sharply, the military would continue to give its complete support to the regime. Political stability would also be bolstered by the traditional Filipino tolerance of adverse economic and social conditions and propensity for compromise. Continuation of the regime's previously demonstrated flexibility would further counterbalance negative trends, although at some point a combination of deteriorating conditions and increased CPP/NPA organizational abilities might allow the Communists to prompt or take advantage of serious instability in addition to the insurgency. [REDACTED]

**The Communist Party of the Philippines/
New People's Army (CPP/NPA)**

The Maoist³ CPP/NPA grew out of a split within the old-line, pro-Soviet Philippine Communist Party (PKP) in the 1960s. Most of the armed cadres and

active younger members joined the CPP/NPA, which adopted a strategy of rural-based protracted warfare. Despite vigorous government attempts to suppress it, the party has grown steadily—from around 2,000 in 1970 to a current estimated level of 6,000, [REDACTED]

Vigorous Leadership. The leadership of the CPP/NPA Central Committee is young, well educated, and adaptable. [REDACTED] past differences among the three top leaders—Secretary General Rafael Baylosis, Chairman Rodolfo Salas, and NPA head Juanito Rivera—have been resolved; if so, the CPP/NPA is now more unified in its goals and tactics than at any time in its history. Although policy implementation is closely monitored from the top, we believe that considerable responsibility is delegated to regional party committees because of their geographical isolation. [REDACTED]

Well-Organized Programs and Systematic Planning. Unlike other Philippine parties, the CPP/NPA has a substantial political action plan as well as an ideology. CPP/NPA strategy calls for a protracted armed struggle based on the support of the rural populace. The guerrillas claim to follow a code of proper conduct in their relations with the peasants, and party propaganda stresses agrarian reform and other popular measures. Each facet of the program is concrete, directly challenges government policies, and is intended to exploit their weaknesses. The program includes

[REDACTED] The insurgents in the countryside have enjoyed relative success, enough to contest government authority in large areas and to establish their own alternative political structures. The energy and resources devoted by the government to countering these rural rebels threaten to drain assets critically needed to maintain support in urban areas, particularly Manila. The development of serious urban violence on top of that in the countryside, particularly if the two were coordinated, could constitute an unmanageable security problem for the government.

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specific measures for a progressive tax structure, land redistribution, nationalization of major industries, and nullification of "unequal" treaties. [redacted]

CPP/NPA strategy is known only in broad terms, [redacted] the party's propaganda effort focuses on the government's economic failures and nationalist issues rather than Marxist dogma. [redacted]

Burgeoning Organization. The CPP/NPA's distinctive combination of "democratic centralism" and "territorial organization" made up of 15 self-governing regional party committees gives the party both resilience and flexibility. Its rural orientation gives it a grass-roots character, and its broad geographic base makes it difficult for the Philippine security services to focus their enforcement efforts. According to US Embassy [redacted] the CPP/NPA is currently giving top priority—with some success—to organizational efforts, in addition to trying to maintain a significant level of insurgency. These efforts are directed at expanding links to potentially sympathetic non-Communist opposition groups—especially students and labor union members—as well as at improving the party's own cell structure. The party uses its nationwide political front organization, the National Democratic Front (NDF), as the basis for these organizational endeavors. [redacted]

Although the CPP/NPA almost certainly plans to rule alone in the postrevolutionary Philippines, it has issued a direct appeal to all sectors of society including students, clerics, government employees, the intelligentsia, the middle class, minorities, and even the "traditional elite opposition." [redacted]

[redacted] Recently, the CPP/NPA has begun openly to solicit foreign support from "all socialist" and "progressive" governments—so far with little success—and to identify the United States as a "target of the people's just attack." [redacted]

Inroads With Labor. Of the estimated 7 million wage earners in the Philippines, only an estimated 2.2 million belong to trade unions. There are no nationwide industrial unions, and the small, local unions that do exist are badly fragmented and ideologically split among leftists, moderate oppositionists, and pro-government groups. Recently, labor rights issues have prompted a record number of strikes directed at indigenous Filipino firms. The government, recognizing the potential political influence of the labor movement, has co-opted the largest labor confederation by providing labor leaders with seats in the National Assembly and using preemptive detention as a means of defusing labor-government confrontations. [redacted]

The increased labor agitation has given the CPP/NPA opportunities for recruitment and propaganda. [redacted]

[redacted] the party has embarked upon a program this year, called the New Ascent, to encourage awareness in the workers' movement and increase the number of party-led strikes.⁵ According to Embassy assessments [redacted] although most recent strikes

⁵ Less than 10 percent of the strikes were party led in 1981. [redacted]

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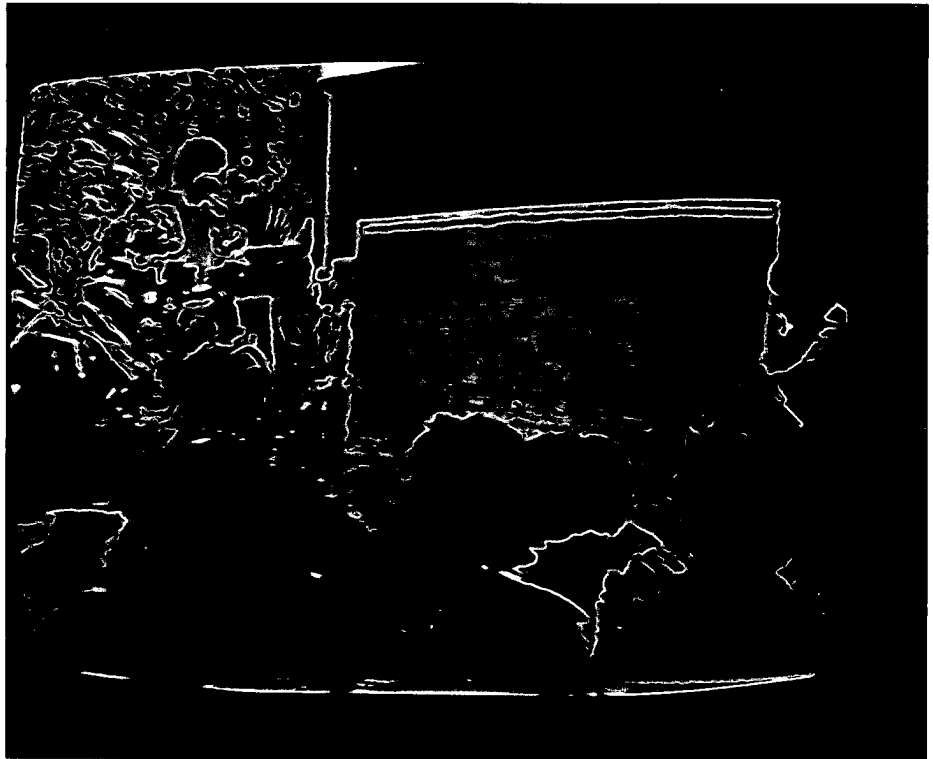
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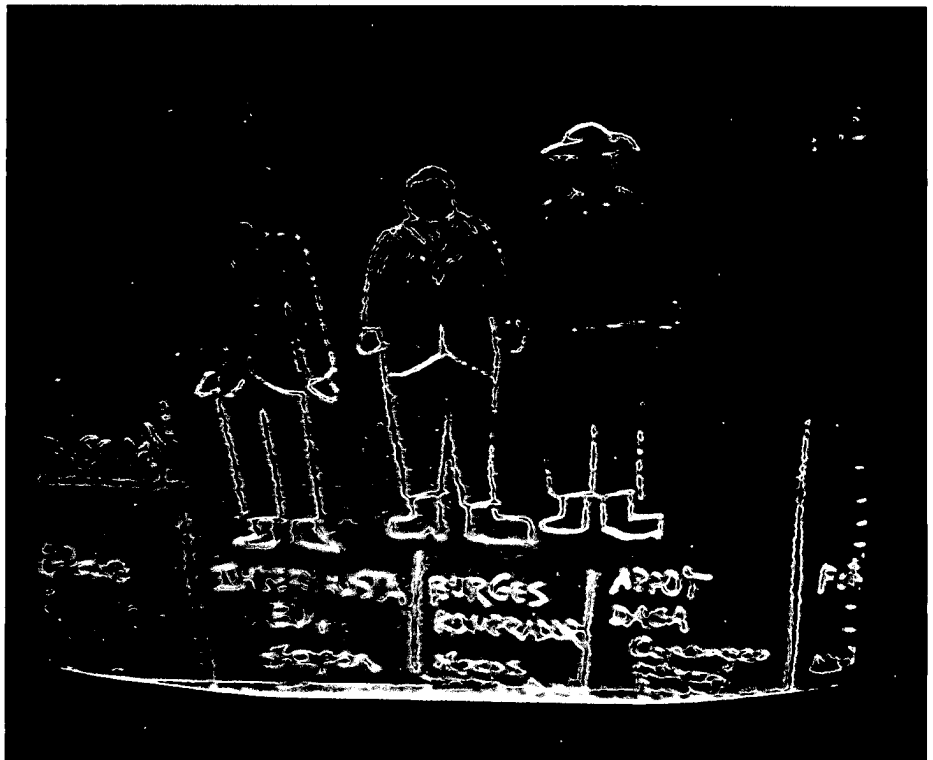
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A CPP/NPA propaganda session in north central Luzon focuses on local grievances and the oppressor classes (identified as US imperialists, urban businessmen, and rural landowners) in winning popular support.



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The CPP/NPA directs its appeal to all sectors of society.

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were instigated by the CPP/NPA and other leftist parties, moderate union leaders also have opposed the government ban on strikes in a lengthening list of "vital industries" and other measures inhibiting organized labor. The creation in 1981 of a new leftist labor confederation, Solidarity (PMP)—an umbrella of trade unions,

organizations of its own.

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—is an important indicator of the improved capability of the radical left to organize and challenge the government-sponsored Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). TUCP controls 75 percent of the Philippines' 2.2 million organized workers.

KM cells exist in almost every major college and university and the KM dominates student politics and newspapers in Manila and Davao. Thus far, the party has concentrated on proselytizing and recruitment. SAMASA, a party considered by students to be a front for the NDF, swept every student council seat in the August 1981 UP elections. The elected student council chairman and vice chairman have been associated with the League of Filipino Students and Youth for National Democracy, both alleged NDF fronts.

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Students: Lifeblood of the Party. The CPP/NPA recruits most of its leaders from the prestigious University of the Philippines (UP) and Ateneo de Manila and its rank-and-file guerrillas from trade and technical schools. The CPP/NPA student front—the Nationalist Youth Corps (KM)—has established front

On the surface, overt student activism appears to be related to campus issues and is not nearly as violent as in the early 1970s, indicating that the CPP/NPA is still a long way from being able to count on students as a reliable political force. The US Embassy believes this quietude reflects cynicism more than acceptance

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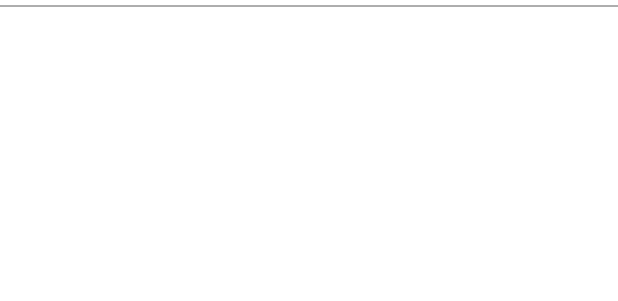
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of the system. The Embassy cites broader grievances concerning political reform, social equity, nationalism, and the economy as the underlying immediate student issues. Higher education has provided opportunities for social mobility, but the current economic slump and rising underemployment may prompt student unrest which, as was demonstrated in 1970 and 1977, can have a dramatic political impact. Although the students are unlikely to be a reliable ally of the CPP/NPA, the party might be able to manipulate them for demonstrations and other actions. []

The Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP)

Analysts agree that the small, pro-Soviet PKP is badly factionalized, lacks effective leadership, is infiltrated by government agents, and has no developed strategy. Filipino government officials believe that its pro-Soviet posture does not appeal to a broad spectrum of society. []

[] Most of the older leaders of the PKP participated in the defeated Huk rebellion of the 1950s and 1960s. These problems, coupled with their dogmatic Marxist focus and interpretation of social problems in the Philippines, and their inability to relate their propaganda to the concerns of most Filipinos inhibit the PKP from gaining any appreciable mass strength. []



The aging and out of touch PKP party leaders appear incapable of organizing anything more than small and generally peaceful labor demonstrations. They are aware that the government watches party activities closely and that members will be quickly detained if they step out of line. The PKP probably would need a new generation of leaders and drastically revised recruitment and propaganda techniques to become a serious threat to the regime. []



Elite UNIDO opposition leaders Jose Diokno and Lorenzo Tanada (center) at boycott rally []

The United Nationalist Democratic Opposition (UNIDO)

The best-known Filipino oppositionists are the remnants of pre-martial-law political parties that have formed a confederation called the United Nationalist Democratic Opposition (UNIDO or UNDO). According to Embassy reports, UNIDO is unified only in wanting to end the Marcos regime. In the past, it has had neither a cogent political philosophy nor a practical political action plan. UNIDO has lived with Marcos's authoritarianism for 10 years and has no plans to take added risks or resort to violence. []

Nevertheless, UNIDO is making an attempt to organize into a national political party. In 1981 its member parties, composed primarily of the Philippines Democratic Party (PDP), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and Laban—a party which opposed Marcos in the 1978 election—began to shed some of their personal rivalries. UNIDO has also recently adopted nationalistic and left-of-center positions. It now espouses “democratic socialist” ideals and calls for the dismantling of American military bases and other forms of “neocolonialism.” Moreover, it has tactically cooperated with Communist and other leftist labor, student, and political front organizations. The latest

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example was a joint political rally held in September 1982 in Bacolod, Negros Occidental, which drew a government-estimated crowd of 20,000. A US Embassy observer described the tone of the meeting as highly nationalistic and strongly anti-US/Marcos.

The Social Democrats

The Social Democratic movement was founded in 1970 by Jesuit priests, led by Father Edicio de la Torre, and called Christians for National Liberation. The movement has since been taken over by Father Romeo Intengan and renamed the Partido Democratico Socialista Pilipinas (PDSP).

Schisms based on differences over strategy and tactics divided the movement in 1978 during the interim National Assembly elections. Radical Eduardo Olaguer branched out to form the "Light-a-Fire" movement and was responsible for a number of arson incidents from December 1979 to January 1980. Another faction, led by Carlos Serapio, favored an alliance with the CPP/NPA. Emmanuel Cruz, the founder of "Sandigan," the military arm, and his followers merged with the Serapio group to form the Christian Socialist Revolutionary Forces (CSRF).

The urban terrorist activities by these splinter groups have given the Social Democrats a reputation for radical violence. Nevertheless, its proclaimed goals for a post-Marcos society remain moderately socialist. Defense Minister Enrile has publicly stated that the Social Democrats are a more significant threat than the Communists because their "moderate" Christian philosophy is more readily accepted by the populace. Even if this were true, government arrests have thrown the movement into disarray and weakened its credibility.

Like the PKP and UNIDO, the Social Democrats suffer from divisions over leadership, tactics, and ideology. The largest, best organized, and most moderate faction—the Philippine Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP)—espouses a Christian form of worker (not state) socialism. Its estimated 2,000 to 3,000 members are most active among the urban poor and

small service workers, primarily in Manila and Davao. It has not targeted the peasants or the middle class and is far from accumulating a critical mass base. Its small military wing—Sandigan—lacks financial resources and has been devastated by government arrests.

The radical methods of the other major faction, the Christian Socialist Revolutionary Force (CSRF), contradict its public calls for a moderate government patterned on the West German model. It urges economic sabotage, massive civil disobedience, selective assassinations, and urban terrorism. We believe the arrest of its key strategists—Carlos Serapio and Emmanuel Cruz—in July 1980 has left the CSRF without effective leadership and accounts for their inactivity since then.

Outlook

On the basis of our assessment of the indicators reviewed, we believe that political stability in the Philippines can be sustained during the next several years of Marcos's tenure. Regime-threatening instability in the medium term would appear to require a number of preconditions, most of which are not now present:

- A sharp decline in military support or capabilities.
- Significant foreign support for opposition groups.
- A decline in President Marcos's self-confidence or political skills.
- Continued worsening of the economic situation.
- Increasingly sharp division among the elite.

There is no room for complacency, however. The Communist insurgency is growing in strength and spreading, socioeconomic pressures are worsening, and vocal opposition to the regime by political elites and the populace is increasing.

The indicators point to the CPP/NPA as the opposition group best positioning itself to take advantage of adverse socioeconomic developments, public hostility to the regime, and any serious breakdown in Marcos's

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or his successor's ability to maintain order. [REDACTED]

They hope to achieve sufficient popular support under a "united front" by 1985-86 to move into a vaguely outlined "offensive stage." The CPP/NPA's own extraordinary rate of growth has enabled it to step up its NDF efforts, particularly with labor and student groups. However, the CPP/NPA's serious shortage of weapons, lack of established foreign support, and the government's preponderance of coercive power have largely kept it in the strategic defensive stage [REDACTED]

Although the moderate opposition remains more prominent, the indicators show the moderates to be seriously factionalized and divided over strategy. Furthermore, the moderates are concentrated in Manila and lack viable national political organizations. This, is not to say that they would not come out ahead in the event of a post-Marcos power struggle or lengthy transition period in which a new government remained weak and unconsolidated. The population, for example, tends to be drawn to popular figures rather than ideologies. Even in a succession crisis, newly freed political loyalties are more likely to be won by moderates rather than by radicals. Furthermore, politically powerful players in the current government will almost certainly survive Marcos, and they will continue to command money and patronage. [REDACTED]

Although the ultimate goals of the democratic and Communist opposition leaders remain in conflict, alliances between them—particularly through the NDF—for the purpose of confronting the Marcos regime or a similarly authoritarian successor government are possible. While the moderate opposition would like to build a national political organization, opportunism and ineffectiveness continue to undermine its efforts. By contrast, the CPP/NPA displays an earnestness and dedication that has attracted such diverse supporters as peasants, workers, clerics, and intellectuals. [REDACTED]

Nevertheless, the CPP/NPA still faces important and possibly insurmountable obstacles. We believe that its future ability to promote or take advantage of rural or

urban upheaval will depend upon a continued weakening of the economy and government unwillingness to allow greater political participation. While the latter is often destabilizing in traditionally authoritarian countries, in the Philippines it would mean a restoration of traditional institutions. Between 1945 and the imposition of martial law in 1972, seven presidents were democratically elected in the Philippines. [REDACTED]

Militarily, the NPA needs to establish more secure base areas from which to launch more ambitious campaigns. Politically, the NDF needs to become more sophisticated to win the middle class and persuade moderate opposition leaders to join it in alliance. The multiplicity of class interests as well as the Filipinos' strong Catholic faith and commitment to democratic principles will require the CPP/NPA to continue to stress nationalism and social and economic equity rather than Marxist dogma if it is to have a serious chance of prompting or taking advantage of an upheaval. [REDACTED]

There also are important factors that militate against political instability. The most obvious is President Marcos's political talents and adaptability. His pragmatic policies, consciously conceived to maintain his legitimacy, tend to anticipate problems and minimize the danger that an unforeseen political crisis will arise. Thus, he has lessened the impact of criticism leveled against his authoritarian style by numerous symbolic gestures. In response to critics of his economic programs, he has surrounded himself with competent technocrats and has made serious efforts to end corruption and improve economic efficiency. [REDACTED]

Another important stabilizing element may be the capacity of the polity to absorb change. Many Western observers believe that the Philippines has a high tolerance for economic deprivation and political oppression, and may be receptive to authoritarian rule for a considerable time to come. The political system is being challenged by continued modernization. Historically, modernization has tended to raise popular

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expectations. The Philippines, which ranks near the bottom in ASEAN in per capita growth, will have trouble meeting these expectations. [REDACTED]

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The strength of a turnabout in the economy will depend not only upon an end to the worldwide economic recession but also upon sound economic policies firmly administered. While Marcos may be able to carry this off—based on the personal position he has built up for himself—it is less certain that a successor would have the political assets to carry out major programs to fruition. [REDACTED]

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